

NEWSRELEASE

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Warden finalists participate in interviews, prison tours

Three finalists for the position of Montana State Prison warden participated in formal interviews and toured the Deer Lodge facility Friday, final steps in the selection process that has been under way for 2½ months.

The three candidates were chosen from among almost 60 applicants for the job, which had been held for 16 years by Mike Mahoney until his retirement Aug. 12.

The three finalists are:

- Paige A. Augustine, warden at the Federal Correctional Institution and Prison Camp in Marianna, Fla. She held that job since 2009. She has worked for the Federal Bureau of Prisons since 1989, most recently as associate warden, deputy warden and warden at facilities in Georgia and Florida. Augustine obtained a bachelor's degree in political science from the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh in 1980.
- Karen L. Cann, former business development manager for a company that engineers and installs electronic security systems. A Florida resident, she worked for Montgomery Technology Systems for 5½ years. Cann also has worked in a juvenile justice program at a Maine community college, a county jail administrator, regional chief of juvenile detention services for the state of Florida, a court counselor, project manager for a corrections management corporation, and a superintendent, warden and unit manager for the state of New Hampshire. She earned a bachelor's degree in psychology from Salem (Mass.) State University, a master's degree in business administration from Southern New Hampshire University and a master's degree in information technology from American InterContinental University in Florida.
- Leroy Kirkegard, a captain with the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Dept. since 2009. He has worked for the department since 1992, rising through the ranks as a corrections officer, sergeant, lieutenant and deputy chief for detention services. Before joining the police department, he spent about 10½ years in the U.S. Air Force. He received an associate's degree in criminal justice from New Mexico State University in 1990 and a bachelor's degree in criminal justice from the University of Nevada-Las Vegas in 1999.

In addition the formal interview with a six-member panel, the finalists also participated in a less-formal interview process with selected prison staff members and a representative of the MEA-MFT. The finalists earlier underwent a four-part screening process that included preliminary background checks.

Director Mike Ferriter said a decision on the next warden will be made as soon as possible after Friday's interviews.

Montana State Prison has a population of nearly 1,500 inmates and a staff of more than 600.